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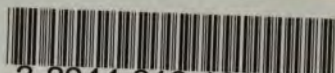
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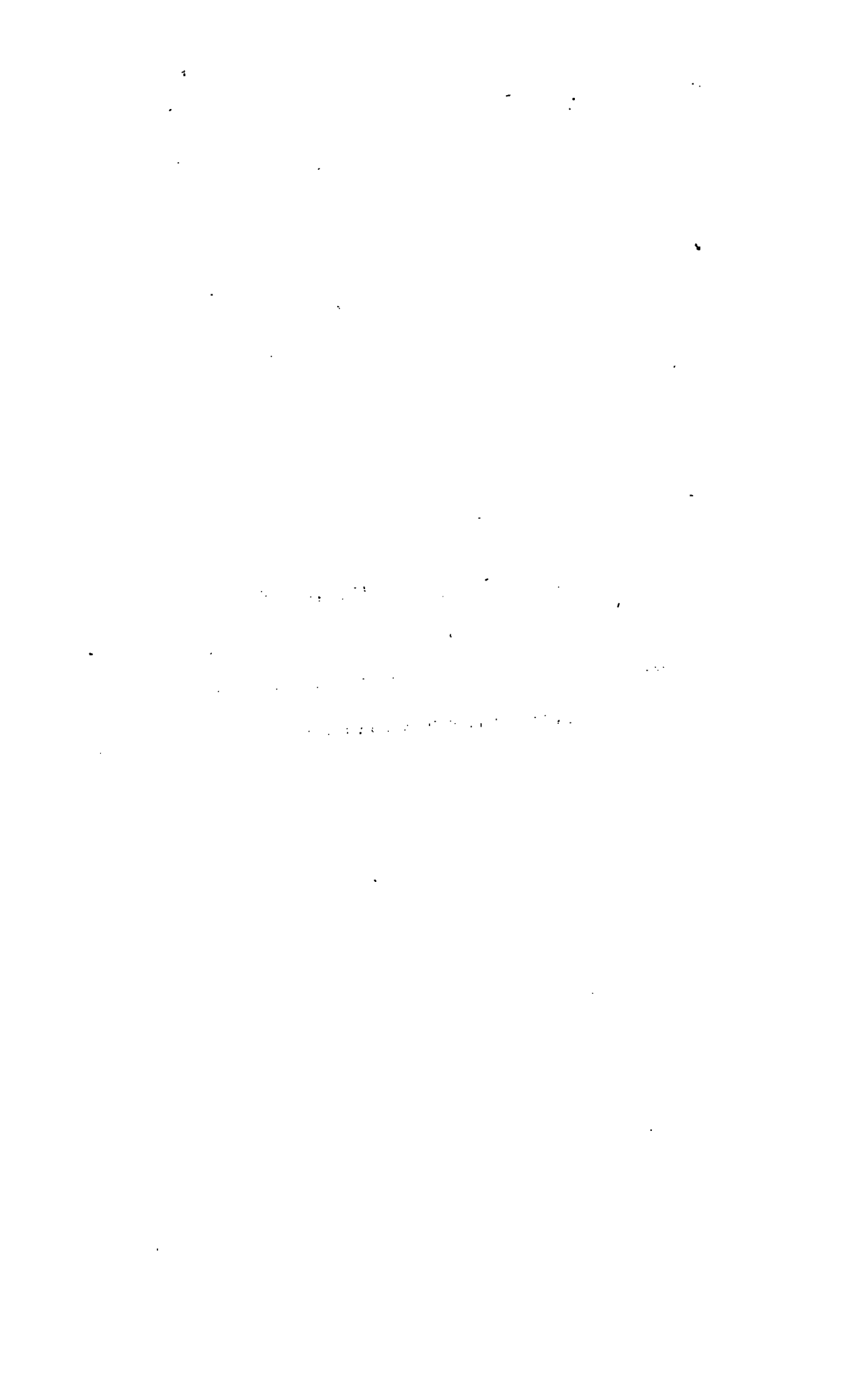
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MR MAY'S DISCOURSE

ON

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES,

DELIVERED IN BROOKLYN, JULY 3, 1831.



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DISCOURSE

ON

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES,

DELIVERED IN BROOKLYN, JULY 3, 1831.

BY SAMUEL J. MAY,
Pastor of the First Church in Brooklyn, Connecticut.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY GARRISON AND KNAPP.

1832.

U.S. 5267.55.5

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A part of the following Discourse was first delivered in Boston on the evening of the 29th of May. It was re-written and preached to my own people, July 3d. Since then, it has been delivered in three different towns. Several persons have expressed a desire that it should be published. I have therefore amended and enlarged it ; and now respectfully offer it to the perusal of my fellow citizens of New-England.

THE AUTHOR.

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DISCOURSE.

EZEKIEL xxii. 29.

The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy.

TO-MORROW is our nation's Jubilee ! Millions will hail it with exultation ! Again will the history of our Independence be rehearsed—the deeds of our Fathers again recounted. We shall hear how firm they were in their resolves, how devoted in the fight, and how successful ; and more than all, how magnanimously they suppressed every selfish wish, and, when they had redeemed it, gave up this goodly heritage to the people. The story has been often told, but it will bear repeating ; and will be listened to by thousands with unabated delight.

The orators of the day will, no doubt, as usual, enumerate the many and great blessings which have been vouchsafed unto us—political and religious freedom—the general diffusion of knowledge—and the unexampled success of the labors and enterprises of our citizens. They will eulogize, in no measured terms perhaps, our civil Constitution ; and indulge, as their predecessors have done, in high if not extravagant anticipations of our future greatness and glory.

My hearers, I hope I am not wanting in patriotism, if I may be unable to join in the approaching celebration, without some feeling of deep shame for my country. I am not insensible to the many favors we have received, the peculiar advantages we enjoy, and the intellectual and moral progress which we have made. But on the other hand, I cannot shut my eyes from the great sins we have committed, from the foul stains which are yet fresh upon our national character. In view of these, methinks it would become us to lower the tone of our rejoicing.

Undue self-gratulation will be as delusive to a nation as to a man. It is as unsafe for a people as for individuals to 'think of themselves more highly than they ought to think.' This mistake, however, we have committed egregiously, especially in the celebration of our national anniversaries. While year after year, we have filled the ethereal concave with the loud-swellng notes of self-applause, sins have accumulated among us to a frightful enormity, sins that have brought home to us from abroad the bitterest reproaches, and have challenged the displeasure of Heaven. Well nigh had we become (what we were called in derision) 'a nation of drunkards.' Thanks be to God, our eyes were opened to our alarming situation before it was too late, though our danger from Intemperance is not yet overpast. So, too, while we have been exulting in our peculiar privileges, party and sectarian spirit has diffused its baneful influences throughout our land. The harsh notes of political discord, sectional and local animosities, (to say nothing of polemic strife,) are resounding every where. Still farther, the unexampled facilities for trade, which were presented to us by the circumstances of Europe soon after our Independence, generated among us a lust of wealth, which has plunged many of our citizens into reckless if not unprincipled speculations, and the arts of dishonest traffic.

But worse, far worse than all, while we have been vaunting our free institutions, claiming for them the admiration of the world, and calling our land the birth-place of liberty, the asylum of the oppressed, we have been holding *two millions* of our fellow men in the most abject servitude. We still hold them thus, seemingly unconscious that we are outraging, in view of the world, the fundamental doctrine of our Constitution, and in sight of Heaven, the first principles of our Holy Religion! We have little claim, therefore, to the honorable titles we assume. There is not a nation on the earth, which is guilty of a grosser violation of the dearest rights of man than we are. We are trampling upon *two millions* of our race, denying them all the prerogatives of humanity, treating them as but a higher order of

brutes. I say *we* are doing this. I say so, because our national government permits slavery ; not only permits, but upholds it ; upholds it, not merely by the sanction which it gives to the laws of the southern States, but by its own enactments of the laws for those districts over which itself presides.

The words of Ezekiel to God's favored nation of old, may be repeated as justly applicable to us, 'The people of this land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy.' Would that this allegation might be uttered to every assembly that may be gathered to-morrow throughout our country, and some fearless prophet send home the truth to every heart ! Would that the future anniversaries of our Independence might be days of unfeigned humiliation, until the yoke of the oppressed millions be broken, and slavery be banished from among us !

Who of you, my hearers, have read of the cruel bondage suffered by the Israelites in Egypt, without feeling an abhorrence of their oppressors ? I trust not one. Who of you have read of the slavery enforced upon their captives by the Greeks and Romans, and not cried shame upon the conquerors ? Not one. Why then, I ask with high astonishment, are you so unmoved in view of similar enormities in our own land, in this enlightened age ? How can you and your fellow citizens generally sing so complacently the praises of Columbia, while there are at least *two millions* here, to whom this country is no better than Egypt was to the children of Israel ?

Perhaps you have not brought yourselves to realize that such is the fact. Still less may you be aware how much we are implicated in the guilt of their oppression. Most of the people of New-England have never seen the slaves, nor heard their cries. The sight and the sound of their sufferings are lost in the distance. Like that mighty river, which drains the waters of half our North America, so does this vast accumulation of physical, mental and moral misery flow on from year to year, increasing through our southern and western states, and the people here regard it not, or regard it as an ordinance of nature, over which they can have no control.

But are the people of New-England thus inattentive to human suffering elsewhere? No. We do not so withhold our sympathies from injured man in climes the farthest off. We are quick to hear the cry of the oppressed from the *ends* of the earth. And we denounce oppressors, be they who they may. We stop not to ask the character, much less the complexion of the sufferers. 'T is enough for us to know that they are men, and that they claim their birthright. How heartily did we sympathise with the South American Republicans in their struggles for liberty; not surely because we knew them to be enlightened, qualified to use aright and enjoy what they sought, but because, and only because, we recognized at once *their perfect right to freedom*.

The call for succor, which came to us from Greece, was heard and promptly answered in almost all our towns. And why? Because the Greeks were a more virtuous, intelligent people than their enemies? No. We had little reason to think them much better than the Turks. But they were the injured party, and therefore we roused ourselves to aid them. However our orators and poets may have gathered up the hallowed associations, which cluster over that classic land, these all were but the decorations, not the point of their appeal. It was the story of their wrongs which found the way to our hearts, and opened them for their relief.

Coming to us from any other land, the cry for freedom sends through us a thrilling emotion. We stop not to inquire, who they are that would be free. If they are men, we know they have a right to liberty. No matter how the yoke was fastened on them, whether by conquest or inheritance, we feel it should be broken. And though to break it, the whole social fabric of their oppressors must be overturned—still we say, let the yoke be broken! With what intense eagerness are we now listening to every day's report from Poland; and how do we exult when we hear the Poles are victorious! Yet we know little or nothing about them. Nor have they any other claim to our more kind regard than the Russians, excepting one, this one, they have been injured, subjugated, cruelly oppressed.

Thus we reason—thus we quickly feel in all cases but one ; the one in which we are implicated with the oppressors. But is there any apology for our inaction and insensibility in this case, that will avail us at the bar of Heaven ? Indeed, is there any which covers, even from the observation of the world, our egregious inconsistency ? No—no. A stinging reproach is often sent home to us from abroad, and we have no shield to break its point or turn its edge.

Let me, however, examine with you the apologies which are generally made for the inactivity of New-England respecting Slavery—the reasons still urged by many for our persisting in this inaction.

The most common reason which I hear is, that Slavery is *confined* to the southern and western States, and we have properly no concern with it. Our brethren of those States, it is said, should be left to reform among themselves the defects of their own institutions.

But is it true, my hearers, that the institution of Slavery is thus confined and local ? Some of my foregoing remarks implied that it is not. How can it be so considered ? In the first place, we consent to live under a general government which assumes that some of its constituent States may hold colored men in bondage, and is pledged to sustain them in doing so. Again, in the formation of new States which occupy territories recovered from the wilderness long since the Union was established, our government has explicitly permitted the introduction of this odious system. Nor is this all. There are several portions of the land still under the direct control of Congress, in which the institution is upheld. Yes. In the very District of Columbia, where Congress assembles, and which is under its immediate supervision, slavery exists in all its abomination. In Washington, our capital city, there is a market for the sale and purchase of human beings. There too is a depot for those, who are engaged in the domestic slave-trade, an infernal traffic which is carried on in the United States to a great extent. My own eyes have seen, within a few miles of our Capitol, a drove of colored

men and women pinioned and chained, and led or driven along like cattle to be sold in Georgia. A kinsman of mine has lately told me that not long since he was awakened from his sleep at a public house in Washington, by the shrieks of a female in the street. He sprang from his bed and inquired the cause. 'O!' said some one from below, 'it is only a black wench who is sulky and will not go on with her gang,' (that were going to be sold in some southern market,) 'and so they are whipping her till she will go.' This occurred, my fellow citizens, and other transactions like it occur frequently within a stone's throw of that building, within whose walls are enacted the laws of the District of Columbia, and of the Union to which we belong. Now you cannot be ignorant that the *majority* of the members of Congress are from non-slaveholding states, and that during almost every session, acts are passed which recognize the lawfulness of slavery; and some which actually go to maintain that institution in the District of Columbia, Florida, and Arkansas.

Keep in remembrance the facts I have mentioned, and you will no longer allow the voice of remonstrance to be hushed by the suggestion, that we of New-England have nothing to do with Slavery—that it is the concern of individual States. This is not so. The whole nation is deeply implicated in this signal iniquity. So long as *our* Representatives in the national Legislature are permitted to vote for, or *silently consent to*, the passage of acts tending in any way to perpetuate the bondage of colored men, so long are we partakers in the sin.

But grant, for a moment, that we are not thus involved—grant all that is urged, that the sin of Slavery belongs wholly to the southern and western States. If we see not that they are attempting reformation, shall we not press them to consider its necessity, and persuade them to their duty? Is not this an office of good neighborhood, ay, of common humanity? Do we not owe as much as this to a foreign nation, and shall we do less for any portion of our own? Is that relation which subsists between the members of this confederacy such, that we are forbidden by it to be as faithful and fearless in admonition and re-

proof of each other, as we should be towards those who live across the Atlantic ? Shall we indeed send the truth abroad to the ends of the earth, and withhold it from those of our own household ? Is it proper for us to labor with the Hindoos, to persuade them to abolish their abominable customs, and can it be improper for us to seek the abolition of as great an abomination among our own citizens ? We shall be told that our southern brethren will not thank us for our counsels,—that they do not wish to hear the truth from us,—that they choose to manage their own affairs in their own time and way. What then ? What effect should this consideration have upon our duty ? Although it may be ungrateful to our brethren to hear the truth respecting slavery—although it may excite for a time their jealousy and hatred towards us, still if we are persuaded that they need to hear it—that it may deliver them from calamity and crime, we surely ought to hazard all consequences, utter and reiterate the truth kindly indeed, always dispassionately, but distinctly as possible.

One word more on this point, before we pass to another. The objection to which I have just replied reveals the depth of degradation to which our colored brethren are reduced among us. It implies, that in determining what our duty is respecting the slavery in the land, we are to consider only how our white brethren may be affected by our procedure. So long as they object to our interference, we should forbear. That is to say—we must ask leave of the oppressors, before we attempt any thing for the relief of the oppressed. If men had acted in other cases upon this principle, where would have been the great achievements of philanthropy ? Indeed, what would have become of the Gospel ?

Probably most who hear me are ready to grant, that what I have said would be true under other circumstances ; but you may suppose that all interference with the system of slavery must now be improper, because our Federal Constitution guaranties to the southern States (by implication, if not expressly) the privilege of holding slaves. Guaranties the privilege of keep-

ing men in bondage, depriving them of those very blessings, which that Constitution itself was intended to ensure to the people of this land ! Guaranties permission to violate its own first principles !—permission to do the greatest wrong ! Who are they that will soberly pretend this could have been done ? I deny, peremptorily deny, that it was in the power of the parties, who framed our Union, to make a compact like this, that can be binding upon us, or could have been binding upon themselves. Where did the framers of our Constitution pretend they got the right to compromise ‘*the unalienable rights*’ of man ? Especially those of them who had pledged their ‘lives, their fortunes, and their *sacred honor*,’ for the support of our Declaration of Independence ? Could they, who had so solemnly averred before the world, as a self evident truth, ‘that all men are created equal,’ vote or even silently consent that a certain part of the inhabitants of their own land should be slaves ? They could not, without the most glaring self-contradiction. They did so, nevertheless, and so exhibited an inconsistency which has no parallel ! The fame thereof will be eternal ! It is manifest, most manifest, that they did what ‘the Declaration’ insists they had no right to do. Of course, they could not themselves have been bound, in justice or in honor, by such an agreement expressed or implied. For when men agree to do wrong, they are under a higher obligation to break, than to maintain the compact. Much less then could they entail upon us any necessity of this sort. If, therefore, we sanction the awful compromise they made, the sin is *all our own*. We cannot throw it back upon them. Every day that we consent to live under a government, which holds two millions of men in abject bondage, we consent to live in a state of signal unrighteousness. No necessity constrains us. If we do not every thing which can be done by lawful means to abolish slavery, we are as guilty of the wrong, as if it began with us. We must bear our part of the disgrace which rests upon our nation. Nor may we complain, as afflicted without cause, should we be overwhelmed by the calamities, which such iniquity must bring upon our country, ‘if God is just, and his justice does not sleep forever.’

But I have something more to say in this connexion, touching the respect due to our Constitution. Was it intended, was it supposed, that that instrument could never be, and should never be, changed for the better? Did our fathers determine that it was perfect, or that their children should not attempt its improvement? Far otherwise. They made provision for the amendment of their work, whenever their successors should see cause to amend it. We are then at liberty, (in virtue of our Constitution at perfect liberty,) to speak and write freely against any part of that instrument which we do not approve, or against any of the laws, institutions and usages which subsist under it. Thus it is that all amendments must be begun. And surely if we have a right to *begin* any plans of improvement, we have an equal right to prosecute them, by all proper means, to their consummation. Our Constitution then does not lay us expressly or by implication under the slightest obligation to be silent respecting slavery. If it intends to secure to our southern brethren the privilege of holding slaves, it certainly does secure to us the right to object to their so doing, and to persist in our opposition, if we think slavery wrong in itself, or prejudicial to the country. Nor can our Southern brethren reasonably complain of us, if we exercise our right in a spirit of kindness, with due consideration of the peculiar difficulties of their situation, a ready acknowledgment of our participation in this national sin, and a manifest willingness to bear our full proportion of the labor and expense that may be necessary to remove our iniquity from us.

Few, I trust, if any, can be found in this community, who will openly justify slavery. More than a few, perhaps, think with me, that our fathers acted unrighteously when, in forming this confederacy, they consented to perpetuate the servitude of our black people, many of whom had been their companions in arms, privations and sufferings, through the war of our Independence. And many there may be, who will grant that we are under no absolute obligation to sustain the compromise which they made. But a large proportion of New-England people, I apprehend, if they think at all upon the subject, excuse them-

selves from doing any thing, on the plea that it is *inexpedient* for us to meddle with slavery. Expediency or inexpediency is so often alleged to excuse the non-performance of obvious duty, that the plea should ever be regarded with suspicion. Inexpediency will generally be found to mean no more than present loss, or pain, or exposure, or even inconvenience. But surely any or all of these should not be a bar to our going 'on, right on,' in any good cause. It is a question which seems to be unsettled in many minds, whether it may not sometimes be inexpedient to say what we know to be true, or to do what we know to be right. For myself I cannot doubt, that, under the moral government of God, 'truth is always better than expediency, or rather that truth is expediency.' In the present case, if it be wrong to hold men in bondage—to deprive them of all the prerogatives of humanity—to treat them only as a higher order of brutes—then it must be right to reprobate the wrong wherever it is found. If in our own country, true patriotism should quicken us to our duty. Unless it be expedient for our nation to continue in unrighteousness, it cannot be inexpedient for us to point out, and labor to remove, our iniquity from us. The greater it is, the more urgent should we be to correct it. The longer it has continued, the less willing should we be to delay our opposition. The deeper its roots have struck into the foundations of our social fabric, and the more its branches have spread over it, the more strength, determination and skill will be required to extirpate it. These are reasons for prompt, vigorous, unwearyed efforts; surely not for inaction or silence another moment.

I am fully aware that the difficulties in the way are many and great. What then? We must meet them ere long. The sooner, therefore, the better. These difficulties can never be less than they now are. They are obviously increasing every year. Shall we draw back? Shall we hesitate to advance, because dangers threaten? Reflect. Certain destruction will overtake us if we persist in our iniquity. It can only be possible or at most probable evil that we dread, in attempting reformation. 'Do justice, let the consequences be what they may,' said a heathen.

Will a christian say less than this ? Duties only are ours. Events are with God.

But here let us look for a moment at the consistency of some, who plead that it is inexpedient for us to interfere with slavery. They tell us that the agitation of this subject in New-England is very irritating to our southern brethren—that it tends to aggravate their jealousy, and to inflame their ill-will. Allow this to be so. There are other subjects upon which they have been equally quick to take offence. But respecting them, have we put any particular restraint upon ourselves, or been cautioned so to do ? Have the feelings or interests of southerners been urged upon us in other cases, to prevent our saying or doing what we believed to be true or proper ?

What could have enraged some of the members of our confederacy more than the Tariff, and questions growing out of it ? This we foresaw. Did the apprehension seal our lips ? Was our regard for our brethren so tender that we kept silence, or abstained from any efforts to effect what the majority of us knew would be for *our own* benefit, and persuaded ourselves might be for the good of the country at large ? No. We pursued our object with unwavering determination, and exulted in our success—the disappointment and rage of many at the south notwithstanding.

Then again in the case of the Southern Indians, our conduct was similar. We knew that the States bordering upon their territory were resolved to get possession of it, and would be driven to madness if we defeated them. Still we exerted ourselves to the utmost in resistance to their unrighteous proceeding, and shall never, I trust, cease to lament our failure.

Other questions have arisen, from time to time, about which there has been the most direct collision of opinion, feeling and interest between the southern states and ourselves. Yet in no instance that I ever heard of, has our regard for them deterred us from uttering all our thoughts, and exerting all our energies to maintain the truth, or to carry our point, although in most of the instances to which I refer, we might have yielded to their

wishes *without sin*, but should only have compromised some pecuniary advantage or political right.

Therefore am I impelled to the conclusion, that our unwillingness to provoke to wrath our white brethren is not indeed the amiable motive of our forbearance respecting slavery. No. We are shamefully *indifferent* to the injuries inflicted upon our colored brethren. We are prejudiced against them. This is evident enough from our treatment of the blacks, who reside among us. It is true we call these free, but we do not suffer them to enjoy equal privileges with ourselves. We judge them not entitled to the same. And it is this prejudice which checks our rising sympathies for those that are in bondage, and reconciles us to the conclusion, that slavery and degradation are their irrevocable lot. If there were two thousand or two hundred, ay, if there were only twenty *white* men in captivity, easy enough would it be to awaken public feeling in their behalf, and even to call out the power and wealth of the nation, if they were needed, to redeem them. But because these two millions are 'guilty of a skin not colored like our own,' we consent that they should suffer a hard bondage; yea, we even sanction the laws by which they are held under the yoke. The blacks, we say, are an inferior race, and cannot be so improved as to fit them for the prerogative of self-government. This is a violent presumption. It is wholly without proof. Consider. The descendants of the Africans have never had an opportunity to rise among us. They have been kept down. They have been and are denied all education at the south; and here they are forbidden by our laws, or by our more unrelenting prejudices, to aspire to any elevation in society, and are marked as an inferior caste. When I reflect how our colored brethren have fared and are still faring in our land, the marvel with me is, that they are still so much like other men. And I am sustained by this with other considerations in the belief that, if they were permitted to enjoy equal advantages, they would in due time attain an equal elevation with ourselves. But we are prejudiced against the blacks; and our prejudices are indurated, I believe, by the

secret consciousness of the wrong we are doing them. Men are apt to dislike those most, whom they have injured most.

Were it not for this, we could not be so indifferent, as we are, to the awful accusation which lies against our nation, of holding two million men in bondage ; buying and selling them as chattels, robbing them of the fruits of their labor, depriving them of their children, embittering their lives with hard service, compelling them to toil as we do brute beasts—above all, depriving them wholly of the blessings of knowledge, and in most cases, even of the consolations of religion. I say, were it not for our prejudices, we should be all alive to this signal enormity, this crowning wickedness of our land, and not give ourselves rest until we had effected a thorough reformation. As Christians, we should of course adopt and pursue only *pacifist* measures ; but as Christians, too, we should persevere in them, with a spirit which nothing could daunt, nothing discourage, nothing tire. We should banish our apprehensions, knowing this to be our duty. We should forget our party animosities, our local quarrels, even our unchristian disputes about Christianity, and write with one mind, one voice, one hand, as we have done against Intemperance, to wipe out this even fouler reproach upon our country, to dry up this even larger source of crime and misery.

Let it not be thought, because I am so earnest for the relief of the slaves, that I am regardless of the claims of their masters upon us. Both are our brethren. Both are alike entitled to our good offices. The duties which we owe to each, however, are not discordant. Slavery is a curse to all concerned in it—to those who enforce, as well as those who are compelled to endure it. This, intelligent Southerners themselves have often avowed. No one has spoken to this effect more unequivocally, or with stronger emphasis, than President Jefferson, and his sentiments have frequently been reiterated by those who have had experience of their truth. After a course of striking remarks upon the subject, the author of *Notes on Virginia* says, ‘the man must be a prodigy, who can retain his morals and

manners undepraved, by such circumstances,' as slave owners are placed in. And not only are the moral influences of slavery most baleful, but it is a blight also upon the very soil. 'It has reduced the value of land in Virginia to little more than *one fourth* of what it is in Pennsylvania.'

Nor is this all. The slaves are men. They have within them that unextinguishable thirst for freedom, which is born in man. They are already writhing in their shackles. They will, one day, throw them off with vindictive violence, if we do not unloose them. 'The hour of emancipation,' says Jefferson, 'is advancing in the march of time. It will come, if not brought on by the generous energy of our own minds, it will come by the bloody process of St Domingo.' Unless we raise them to the enjoyment of their rights, they will arise in the power of oppressed humanity, and fearfully avenge their wrongs. The power of oppressed humanity ! before it Europe is now standing aghast, and the thrones of tyrants are tottering to their fall ! We cannot long escape its fiery indignation. The Lord will surely see the affliction of his people, which are in *this* land ; 'he will hear their cry by reason of their task-masters, and he will come down to deliver them out of our hands.' Some Moses, or at least a Petion, will be born among the children of Africa, who will teach them their rights, and lead them forth to their defence. And the God of our fathers, in whom we too profess to trust—'the Almighty has no attributes which can take side with us in such a contest.'

We owe it then to the masters, scarcely less than to the slaves, to be up and doing ; to be active and fearless in the cause of truth and justice. It is impossible that all the provisions which the southern States have made, should long afford them protection from the wrath of the injured. Nothing but reformation can arrest the consequences of unrighteousness. Nothing but right doing can atone for wrong. It is irrational to suppose, that the day of retribution will be long delayed, if the injustice be persisted in. There are in this republic nearly two millions and a half of men, who, until this hour, have re-

ceived the deepest injuries. Of these, more than two millions are in abject bondage, and more than three hundred thousand, though nominally free, are enchained by us to a degradation scarcely less galling than actual slavery. Our Southern brethren, and we too, must hasten to convince them that we are unfeignedly penitent for the evil we have done them, by doing every thing, the case will admit, in the way of reparation. We must show them that we are willing, that we intend to elevate them, at the earliest period possible, to a perfect equality of rights and privileges with ourselves. They are entitled to as much—we must not, we cannot with impunity, deny it to them.

Here, some of you would perhaps admonish me of the very great danger, to the property and even to the lives of our southern brethren, which you suppose would follow any attempt to elevate the intellectual and civil condition of the blacks. I often hear it said—‘Give the slaves knowledge and liberty, they will cut their masters’ throats, and become vagabonds and banditti throughout the land.’ Ah! how does this comport with the sentiments, we of New-England so freely utter on other occasions, respecting the influence of knowledge and liberty? We are not wont to speak thus of the tendency of these our own distinctive privileges. We do not apprehend that elsewhere such evils will follow the diffusion of intellectual light and civil freedom. No. We hail with peculiar pleasure, as a *certain* good, the increase of knowledge and liberty among every other people; not doubting that it will enlarge their views of moral obligation, purify their principles of conduct, and lessen the occasions and incentives to crime. Though we know, at the same time, that in any community the raising of the depressed classes must encroach upon the prescriptive rights of the elevated—reduce their power, perhaps their property; and that the process of great changes in society, generally brings inconvenience, sometimes loss, and even ruin upon those, who do not acquiesce and assist in it. Still, in every case but the one now before us, we should consider all these things as partial evils attendant upon universal good. It would be hard to persuade us

that the dissemination of knowledge and liberty among the serfs and peasants of Europe will render them worse men, or more dangerous members of society. And we every year contribute our thousands and tens of thousands to the support of those, who have gone into the darker regions of the earth, there to proclaim the gracious truths of the Gospel—truths which have proved to be the seeds of political, scarcely less than of intellectual and moral freedom.

By what process of reasoning then, or by what facts can it be made to appear, that the same cause will not produce the same good effects upon the ignorant and degraded in our own land, as in every other? What is there in the character of our slaves, which should render it necessary for us to withhold from them especially those blessings, which we are urging upon the acceptance of the ignorant and the oppressed, in every other part of the world? 'We have the uniform testimony of writers,' says the North American Review, 'and what is more than all, the authority of Park, that the negro character is mild, gentle and generous, not prone to resentments, and equally ready to forget, and reluctant to inflict an injury.' That these traits have not been obliterated in America, is evident from their infrequent attempts to avenge themselves upon their oppressors; and their hearty attachment to the whites who have shown them kindness. Unless, therefore, it be delayed until their long suffering is exhausted, any place really designed for the melioration of their condition would doubtless be met on their part by corresponding good feelings.

There is one other plea so often urged to arrest our interference with the institution of slavery, that it must not remain unanswered. We are told that should their bondmen be set at liberty, many of our southern brethren would be utterly impoverished, ay—to touch the tenderest feelings of our hearts—that not a few venerable widows and helpless orphans, born to ease and affluence, would be at once reduced to penury; for that all their wealth is vested in their slaves.

In reply it were enough to say, *man cannot have a good title to the liberty of man*; excepting only in those cases where

liberty is forfeit to society in consequence of crime. This is obviously true—an ultimate fact—a law of nature. No argument can be necessary to prove it. The abolition of slavery would, therefore, take from our southern brethren *only what does not now belong to them*. This is already acknowledged by not a few of themselves ; and I am confident that many more, whose pecuniary circumstances would be most affected by the change, will be the first to acquiesce in it, when they shall be brought to realize the enormous wickedness of the present system.

It cannot be denied, that, in some instances, the emancipation of the blacks may turn the abodes of wealth into habitations of want. Such reverses of fortune, however, are occasioned, probably to as great an extent, by new laws arresting or turning the career of commerce, or of our moneyed institutions. Above all, are these reverses the inevitable consequence of war, that heathen custom which is still so popular throughout Christendom. Yet if the rulers of our nation, the political demagogues and reckless partizans, were resolved upon this savage mode of redressing an injury, or gathering a few wreaths of military glory, in vain should we plead with them to forbear, pointing them to the thousands of wives that would certainly be made widows, and ten thousands of children that would become orphans, and the millions of debt that would be accumulated upon the nation, and the poverty, disease and crime that would be diffused among us even if the highest success should crown their mad project. This plea in such a case, I fear, would not be listened to a moment, or would be set aside by an unfair application of that great truth, 'that partial evils are often attendant upon universal good.' Why then should this plea be of any avail in the present case, when we are calling upon the nation to do right rather than wrong, to do good and not evil ?

But I will not dismiss it here. As the holders of slaves were led to make this investment of property in the liberties of their fellow men, not only by the example of *our* fathers as well as their own, but also by *the implied guaranty of our national government* that it should be a valid investment, we are bound as a

nation to indemnify, so far as is practicable, all who may be materially injured by the overthrow of that institution which we have upheld among them. And better, far better would it be to incur a debt of hundreds of millions, if so much were necessary to accomplish the abolition of slavery, than to squander half as much as we have already done in war.

By this time you may think it incumbent upon me to show in what way this momentous change, in the condition of two millions of the inhabitants of this land, is to be effected ?

Probably the best method to be adopted, is not yet ascertained ; nor will it be until we have made fair trial of several. Let it not, however, be said, that we ought to do nothing until we have discovered what the best method is. We do not refrain thus from effort in other cases. Why should we in this ? Whenever any calamity has befallen us, or seems to be impending, we set ourselves at once to avert or remove it, if possible. And we generally have to learn by trial—by often repeated trials—yes, by unsuccessful, no less than successful experiments, what are the best means of relief.

Let the people anxiously inquire what can be done, and they will be informed. Let the wise heads and the good hearts of our countrymen be seriously addressed, to the abolition of slavery, and they will soon compass and comprehend the subject in all its parts. I am aware that now it seems to be beset with appalling difficulties. But these must be encountered ; and who, that believes from the heart in the moral government of God, can doubt that we shall be enabled to surmount these difficulties, if we go forward to our duty in humble reliance, feeling that any thing we may incur will be better than to continue as we now are. For myself, when I have been contemplating this subject, I always rise in the determination, that the abolition of slavery ought to be attempted, cost what it may ; for that it is preferable to suffer evil in any measure, than to continue doing evil. If I know my own heart, 'I had rather be myself the slave, and wear the chains than fasten them upon another.' And much as I love my country, I had rather we should cease to be

an independent people, than to remain as we now are, the oppressors of millions. Let, then, no fears for ourselves detain us from attempting, with all our might, by christian means, to remove this wickedness from us.

I say by christian means. Palsied be that tongue, which would counsel violence upon our southern brethren, or would utter a syllable to excite their bondmen to insurrection. Rather let unwearied pains be taken to soothe the irritated feelings of the slaves, and prevent their exasperation. Let the bond and the free blacks every where be thoroughly instructed in our holy religion. Let us open to their view the prospect of that blissful world 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' Let them be taught what we ourselves have not yet learnt 'to act upon, the peculiarly evangelical principle of charity ; that principle, which, if it becomes implanted in their hearts, will induce them to suffer injury long, and still be kind—to bear all things rather than return evil for evil—that principle which will persuade and enable them never to avenge themselves, but to commit their cause unto Him who judgeth righteously. Violence of every sort is inconsistent with our religion and our reason too ; and frequently subverts the very purpose it would hasten to accomplish. It ought, therefore, to be of all things avoided by those who aim at the abolition of slavery. Our colored brethren should, even more than others, abstain from it.

But while we are entreating them to bear and forbear, we are bound to do all we can to lighten their heavy burthen.

The first thing to be done is to awaken the public sympathy in their wrongs—to urge their peculiar claims upon the humanity and justice of the American people, and to prick the consciences of their oppressors. Information respecting them must be diffused throughout our community. The strong appeal in their behalf should be fearlessly uttered every where. The citizens of New-England need to hear it, scarcely less than those at the South and West. The details of the slavery in our republic should be spread before the people. Few realize it in

half its extent and abominations. Most of us in this part of the country seem to be wholly unconscious that we are the holders of slaves. Occasionally, indeed, the fact is alluded to ; but then too often in such cold terms of acquiescence as we use in allusions to the Dismal Swamp. It is allowed to be, like that, an ugly feature on the fair face of our country ; but like that, it is regarded among us as established by nature—an incurable evil.

It is obvious, too obvious, that we are not moved as we should be at ' the wrong and outrage ' in our land. The privations and sufferings of two millions of human beings in these United States must therefore be recounted and described. Their natural right to liberty, and all the prerogatives of man, must be insisted on. The awful criminality of those who hold them in bondage must be distinctly announced. Thus the minds of the people would be enlightened, and their hearts impressed ; until a corrected public opinion and feeling would be brought to bear with all their force upon this national iniquity. Our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, of the moral wonders wrought in our day by public opinion. This same agent is competent to achieve the overthrow of slavery. Only let it be brought to bear with well directed steady aim, and it must, it will accomplish the victory over prejudice, and selfishness, and fear. Nothing that is wrong can bear investigation. Let then the truth, the whole truth, be told. Let it be busily repeated in every town and village in our land, at the north and the south—in the east and in the west. Every where there must be minds, which will embrace it quickly. Every where there must be hearts, which will be deeply affected. Every where there must be hands, ready to join in the cause of the oppressed.

I hastily said, let the whole truth be told. No,—no. The half of what is true, respecting the slavery in our land, will be enough to effect its abolition. There is no need that we detail what have been called the abuses of the system. We need not gather up for description the instances of singular cruelty, the scenes of heart-rending anguish, which have been witnessed at the south. It will be enough only to exhibit *the legal provisions*

for oppression—to rehearse the Slave-Laws* enacted and enforced by our state and national governments—this will be enough to show how atrociously wicked the system is. The cry of shame shall then be raised, and daily gather strength—a cry coming from every quarter of the land ; and it shall fasten the attention of our legislators, and keep it fixed intently, until they have devised a mode (doubtless a very simple one) by which our colored brethren may be raised, as soon as possible, to a full participation in the privileges of which we boast. Instead of spending their strength upon the mooted questions in political science, or upon unprofitable speculations about misty points of theology, the greatest minds among us will be impelled to assist our legislators to adopt and carry into operation the best measures for effecting this most desirable object. For all of every party and sect must, I think, agree in this—that that cannot be a wise or a righteous government, which holds two millions of its subjects in abject bondage—and that they surely cannot be a people of the Lord, who are living in defiance of his ‘ Royal Law.’

I have repeatedly alluded to our prejudice against Africans and their descendants—the opinion so prevalent among us that they are by nature a very inferior grade of human beings. This, I am persuaded, does more than any thing else to perpetuate their degradation. So soon, however, as a sense of justice shall bring our white brethren to a fair investigation of this opinion, they will find its correctness to be far from unquestionable. Climate, food, occupation, habits of living, and education, will account for great if not the greatest moral, intellectual, and physical differences observable among the races of men. More information will in this case, as in others, dispel prejudice—lead the people to give further credit to the declaration of the Apostle, that ‘ God hath made of one blood all the dwellers upon earth ;’ and make them sensible how much they have done to prevent the rise of these oppressed fellow beings.

* A small 8vo. volume was published in 1826, by Mr George M. Storr, giving an account of the laws of slavery in this land of freedom.

Those of our citizens who are so zealous about internal improvements, if they cannot be affected by higher considerations, may be brought, by a full expose of the *wretched economy* of slave labor, to see that no measure can be devised which would be so conducive to the thrift of our country as the converting of two millions of slaves into two millions of free laborers. And all such as have only the welfare of the nation in view, would readily consent that this improvement shall first be made, though to effect it would consume all our surplus revenue.

The panegyrists of the Union must long since have perceived, that nothing threatens its continuance so seriously as the institution of slavery. If, then, they truly desire to preserve the Union, can they withhold themselves from the effort to avert its dissolution?

No subject, probably, occupies the attention of the best minds in our country, at the present day, more than *popular education*. If the generous sentiments which they are so freely uttering in this behalf be correct, will they not ere long insist that this blessing should be first bestowed upon those who need it most?

But above all, may we not confidently expect that the admirable spirit of missionary enterprise, which has gone to the ends of the earth to make proselytes, will soon be roused to still greater daring and enduring for the salvation of the millions in this christian land, upon whom not a ray of the Sun of Righteousness is now permitted to fall?

So soon as an interest in the welfare of our colored population shall be generally felt, even in this portion of the States, if not before, our representatives will gather courage to speak of their rights and their wrongs, upon the floor of Congress. Discussions respecting them will often arise. A thorough investigation will be demanded into the condition of the slaves and of the free blacks: and no act of Congress unfriendly to either, will again be suffered to pass without determined opposition.

These things, you may tell me, will keep the nation in a turmoil of passion—and eventually throw us into a civil war.

My apprehensions are not so high. If the friends of liberty and justice preserve a christian demeanor, their opponents will soon be disarmed of their resentment. It will be apparent to them that we are not enemies to slave owners, but to slavery—that we wish the oppressors no harm, only that the oppressed may go free. But we ought ever to be willing to suffer in the cause of humanity, as well as to advocate it. The great heathen maxim which I have once quoted, still rings in my ear, and demands the entire homage of my understanding—‘Let justice be done, whatever may be the consequences.’ The attempt to abolish slavery will doubtless occasion some evils, but it will rid us of incomparably greater. It will rid us of our great transgression. To the admonitions of the timid and over-cautious, there need be but one reply—we have nothing to do with apprehension, when duty is before us. I hear it said, that the system of slavery is so interwoven with our confederacy, that the one cannot be removed without destroying the other. This I do not believe. I am confident that if the wise heads and benevolent hearts that are in our country would but exert themselves, the evil might be removed without destroying the good. But, my hearers, so impressed am I with a sense of the imperious obligation that is upon us, to abolish slavery as soon as possible, that I must say—if it be necessary, let the very foundations of our civil fabric be broken up—and if this rock of offence cannot be taken from under it, let the whole superstructure fall. If our republic cannot stand but upon the necks of two millions of my fellow beings, let it fall, let it fall, though I be crushed beneath it.

But I do not apprehend such a catastrophe. I have imagined it possible, and have used strong language in view of it, that you may justly appreciate the principle on which we are bound to act, i. e. to escape from crime, even if it be at the expense of our lives. Life has nothing that should make us wish to retain it, if it can be retained only by the compromise of what is better than life.

Many persons are startled whenever they hear the assertion, that slavery ought to be *immediately* abolished. 'The community,' they say, 'cannot become adjusted to so new a state of things. Neither are the slaves themselves prepared to be their own masters. An immediate dissolution of that relation which subsists between them and their owners, would be disastrous to both parties.' The least reflection, it seems to me, would allay all apprehension on this score. There is no danger that the event we so fervently desire, will come to pass too soon. They have a right to freedom now, and we claim it for them. But we are only too well aware, that time must intervene before they will be freed. Even if we were proposing the most summary procedure—if we designed to deliver them by force of arms—it would take a great while to enlist sufficient numbers in their cause—to arrange our plans of operation—and then to carry those plans into effect. But the course which I believe the advocates of immediate abolition would, to a man, recommend, will be, perhaps, a much more dilatory process. I have already marked out a part of it, and need not repeat. It is the only right course. It will be effectual. But its accomplishment will be a work of time. Ay, of so long a time, that we can have no patience with unnecessary delay. Therefore would we quicken our fellow citizens to their duty, by urging this appalling truth—that we are holding millions of beings in abject bondage, who have, *at this moment*, as perfect a right to liberty as ourselves ! Surely their emancipation ought to be as immediate as it can be ! How soon it may be effected, can only be known when the efforts that are to effect it shall have been made. Every one, therefore, is bound to come forward without delay to assist, as he may be able, in this great labor of love.

I have already mentioned many things that must be done, in behalf of the slaves. Others are proposed. There is not time for me to notice all. One, however, claims your attention.

The Colonization Society proposes to assist those of African descent, who may wish to return to the land of their fathers. There they may, at once, enjoy those privileges, from which



our prejudices here debar them. There they may sooner show to the world their capacity for self-government, and for the highest attainments in knowledge and virtue ; and put to shame those who would asperse their race. It is believed, moreover, that a colony established upon those benighted shores, may hasten the utter suppression of the slave-trade, and diffuse over that region of darkness the lights of Art, of Science, and of the Gospel. These are the avowed objects of the association. Another motive has been charged upon some of its branches and individual members. It is alleged that many have united with the Colonization Society, for the sake of hurrying the colored people away from our land. This is a base, foul motive, wherever it be found. These United States are the native country of most of the colored, as much as of the white population. If they prefer to abide here, they have as good a right so to do as we have, and it is our bounden duty to make this a pleasant home to them. Especially is this our duty, because they are the descendants of those whom our ancestors brought hither by a cruel compulsion.

May the Society, of which I speak, be speedily extinguished, if it indeed be founded upon the wish to get rid of our black population ! Some I know and many I believe there are, who have joined it with the single purpose of assisting any of our colored brethren, who may prefer to emigrate to a clime where there are no prejudices against them, and where they may at once enjoy the sweets of liberty, under the fostering care of our government, which has not yet the magnanimity to grant them that enjoyment here. All who are actuated by this motive alone, are deserving of the same praise that we now so heartily bestow upon those men in England, who assisted our puritan forefathers to found their colonies 'in this then howling wilderness.' It will ever be the signal disgrace of those times, that such men as the pilgrims were driven away from the abodes of civilization, because of their mode of faith. Hereafter it will be remembered against us of this day, as no less shameful, that we oppressed and treated cruelly so many of our brethren, only because of the tincture of their skin. But in the judgment of posterity, there

will be an honorable exception in favor of those, who assisted the oppressed in either instance to escape to a wilderness, from the unrelenting prejudices of people calling themselves christians.

But bear in mind, my hearers, that however abundant may become the resources of the Colonization Society, they can never be sufficient to transport any considerable portion of the blacks to Africa—even if any considerable proportion should be found willing to go thither. It is not at all probable that there will ever be fewer colored people in these States than there are now. While, therefore, we may cherish the colony at Liberia, we must not forget that we have a much greater work to do at home. We are to provide for the welfare and continued improvement of more than two millions of the descendants of Africa, who will ever be a part of our population. They must all be liberated from bondage, and from the burden of our prejudices. They must all be educated as we are, and, as soon as may be, constituted free citizens of these United States, enjoying the same civil and political rights and privileges as we do, and all the emoluments and honors to which their relative industry and worth may entitle them. To this result we must look forward, and begin now to provide for it.

It was my intention to have urged upon you the plan that is already in some progress for procuring the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. As we participate through our representatives in the government of that District, we certainly have the right, nay it is our duty to insist, that the institution of slavery shall be banished at least from that portion of the land, over which our national government has direct control. And one would suppose, even the most incredulous and the most timid could not object to an experiment being made on so small a scale, of the effect of liberty and education upon the descendants of Africa.

I also wished to call your attention to the peculiar propriety of our endeavoring to procure the repeal of all laws in the New England States, which are derogatory to the colored population ; and to assist them all in our power to rise in the scale of intel-

lectual and moral worth. It will be to little purpose that we express the deepest interest in the greater wrongs, which they are suffering in other parts of our country, if we continue to hold them in degradation here.

But I have already trespassed upon your patience. If I have wearied you, blame me and not my subject. If I have laid down any propositions which seem to you unsound, do them the justice to consider and examine before you discard them. If I have made any assertions, which you think to be untrue, take the pains to inquire farther before you reject them.

No subject can have higher claims upon your immediate, long continued, serious attention. The millions in our land, who are denied all the rights of man, call to you for assistance. The imminent danger of the nation should rouse you to reflect and act. It is impossible, (if there be a moral government over the world,) it is impossible that we should continue in prosperity, if we continue in such unrighteousness. In the solemn words of Mr. Jefferson, I must again say, 'I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice will not sleep forever.'

2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of internal controls to prevent fraud and ensure the accuracy of financial data. It outlines the key components of a robust internal control system, including segregation of duties, authorization procedures, and regular monitoring and evaluation.

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4. The fourth part of the document explores the role of technology in modern financial management. It discusses the benefits of using accounting software and other financial management tools, and provides guidance on how to select and implement the right technology for your organization.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

The following works are recommended to those who wish for information on the subject of slavery.

The History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, by Thomas Clarkson. 2 vols. 12mo.

Thoughts on the Necessity of improving the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies. By Thomas Clarkson.

The Slavery of the British West India Colonies Delineated as it exists both in Law and Practice, and Compared with the Slavery of other Countries, Ancient and Modern. By James Stephen. 2 vols. 8vo.

Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species. By S. S. Smith.

Letter on the Comparative value of Free and Slave Labor. By Adam Hodgson.

Lectures on the Physiology, &c. of Man. By William Lawrence.

Notices of Brazil. By Rev. R. Walsh. 2 vols. 12mo.

On the Intellectual and Moral Faculties of Negroes. By H. Gregoire. An English translation of this work was published in Brooklyn, N. Y. in 1810.

View of the Slave Laws of the United States. By George M. Stroud.

The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable. With Animadversions upon Dr Smith's Philosophy. By Rev. George Bourne.

2. The second part outlines the specific procedures and protocols that must be followed when recording transactions. This includes details on how data should be collected, stored, and reviewed to ensure its integrity and reliability.

3. The third part addresses the role of the management team in overseeing the record-keeping process. It stresses that management must ensure that all staff are properly trained and that the necessary resources are provided to support the system.

4. The fourth part discusses the importance of regular audits and reviews to verify the accuracy of the records. It notes that these checks are crucial for identifying any discrepancies or errors early on.

5. The fifth part covers the security measures that should be implemented to protect the records from unauthorized access or loss. This includes both physical and digital security protocols.

6. The sixth part provides a summary of the key points discussed and reiterates the commitment to maintaining high standards of record-keeping throughout the organization.

7. The final part of the document includes a list of references and a conclusion, summarizing the overall findings and recommendations.





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